Overregulation is particularly difficult for the rural areas of the West, where in our case more than half of the State belongs to the Federal Government. The things we do in our way of life, in our economy, our job creation, is always regulated more than most anywhere else in the country. We are very, very, concerned.

Let me give one example. There are leases, of course, for livestock grazing on Bureau of Land Management lands and on lands of the Forest Service. The leases are renewed regularly. This year, it was decided there had to be a NEPA study—that is supposed to be confined to areas of national concern—for every renewal of a grazing lease. The irrigators have to spend $100,000 this year to do a NEPA review on their conservation land. The cost of this is paid by you and by me.

Regulatory reform needs to have principles. This bill has them. It has cost-benefit analysis. I think that is a proper and reasonable thing. You and I do that. We make decisions for ourself and our family. We have a cost-benefit analysis, even though it may be informal. A risk assessment—it could be that the last few percentage points are too expensive to be reasonable and common sense. We need a look-back provision so we can go back and take a look at the regulations that now exist. There needs to be a sunset provision so that burdensome laws and burdensome regulations can be dropped or renewed. There needs to be a judicial review. S. 343 incorporates these principles.

I think we have a great opportunity to make better use of the resources that we have, Mr. President, to provide greater protection for human health and safety in the environment at a lower cost and to hold regulators accountable for their decisions. What is wrong with that? I think that is a good idea, to hold the Congress accountable for the kinds of regulations, to limit the size of Government, so that we can create jobs that help consumers improve competitiveness overseas.

We should take advantage of this opportunity. This week will be the time to do it, to be realistic, to apply common sense, to reduce the cost and the burden of regulation. I am delighted that we will have a chance this year, this week, Mr. President, to do that.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 15 minutes as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, last week the Congress was not in session, but the Federal Reserve Board met downtown in their marble building and took a baby step in rectifying the mistake it made on seven occasions last year when they increased interest rates in order to slow down the American economy.

Last year, the Federal Reserve Board said it was combating inflation in our economy, so it desired to slow down the economy some and prevent a new wave of inflation. Now it appears the Federal Reserve Board has apparently won a fight without a foe. There was no wave of inflation across the horizon.

Last week's announcement to decrease interest rates by one-quarter of 1 percent made the stock market ecstatic. In fact, the Federal Reserve Board acted to ratchet down inflation marginally and the stock market reached record highs.

In fact, if we look at the combination of economic news in the last week or two, it is quite interesting. The Federal Reserve Board says it has won a fight with a foe that did not exist. The stock market reached record highs. And corporate profits are at record levels.

The question would be, if all of those pieces of economic news are so good for the American economy, if this is such wonderful economic news, then why are the Americans so displeased? Why are the American people not dancing in the streets about this economic news? Record profits should mean that businesses are doing well creating jobs, expanding, hiring. Record stock market levels should mean that the experts think the American economy is robust and growing.

The simple answer is the people in this country are not satisfied because this economic news masks an important fact. The American people are not satisfied with this economic news for the same reason that the Federal Reserve Board's actions last year were a mistake. The fact is, and the reason is, we are now living in a global economy.

That means that stellar economic numbers may not translate into economic opportunities here in our country. Surrounding all of the bright economic news that was trumpeted last week, there was one small but critically important fact: American wages are going down.

Yes, corporate profits are at record levels. Yes, the stock market is ringing the bell. Stock market indexes have never been higher in their history. But the fact is, American wage earners, American workers, are doing worse. Investors do better; American workers lose ground. Corporations do better, American wage earners do worse. Wealth holders succeed; working families fail.

There is no economic news that this administration, this Congress, the Federal Reserve Board, the captains of industry, or the investment moguls on Wall Street can give the American people that will make them feel better about this economy as long as their real wages are declining. Unless and until we stop a 20-year decline in American wages, the American people will not be satisfied.

I always find it interesting that the press trumpets every month the report of how much we consumed. We measure economic health by consumption. But, of course, that is not economic health. It is what you produce that relates to whether you are healthy or not, not what you consume. But we trumpet, every month, all kinds of indices about economic performance and we see nothing—except maybe 2 column inches in the paper once every 6 months—about American wages. Yet every month, the indices show American wages are declining.

Frankly, we have a circumstance today where corporate giants, led by U.S. corporations and followed by their international competitors, are constructing an economic model for the world that worries American workers. They have decided they want to produce where it is cheap and sell back into established marketplaces. That means corporations increasingly produce in Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Singapore, Honduras, China—around the world—where they can hire cheap labor, often kids. They can pay dirt-cheap wages, they can dump their pollution in the air and in the water, make their product, and send it back to Pittsburgh for sale.

That strategy of playing the American worker off against 1 or 2 billion others in the world who are willing to work for pennies an hour is a strategy that might well lead to record corporate profits, but it also leads to declining U.S. wages. And that is the economic problem this country has to fix.

The bottom line of economic progress in this country must be, "Are we increasing the standard of living for the American worker?" And the answer today, amidst all of the glory of the wonderful economic news trumpeted every day in recent weeks, is no. The standard living for the average American worker is not advancing. It has been declining.

Our economic strategy for the 50 years following the Second World War was, for the first 25 years, a foreign policy disguised as economic strategy to try to help everybody else. We did that and it was fine. We could afford to do it because we were the biggest and the best and the strongest and the most. And even as we did that we progressed and so did the American worker. But for the last 20 to 25 years it has been different.

Our trade policy is still largely a foreign policy. It does not work to support the interests of our country. And what we see as a result of it is that other countries are growing and advancing and our country, measured by standard